



Aruba: The island of Aloes



Page 11

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY
PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

MONDAY:

ANDERSON BAHAMON
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 TO 8:30 P.M.

FRIDAY:

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST
7:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

SATURDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
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Massive sewage spill flowing into Potomac River upstream from Washington

By **MICHAEL PHILLIS** and **REBECCA BOONE**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A massive pipe that moves millions of gallons of sewage has ruptured and sent wastewater flowing into the Potomac River northwest of Washington, D.C., polluting it ahead of a major winter storm that has repair crews scrambling.

DC Water, which operates the sewer system, is hooking up pumps to divert sewage around the rupture and allow crews to make repairs. It has cautioned people to stay out of the area and to wash their skin if exposed.

The spill was caused by a 72-inch (183-centimeter)



A recently placed warning sign is seen at the sight of a massive pipe rupture, as sewage flows into the Potomac River, right, in Glen Echo, Md., Friday, Jan. 23, 2026.

Associated Press

River near Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historic Park.

Crews are removing lock gates on the C & O Canal and will set up pumps to divert the sewage into the canal, rerouting it away from the river and back into the sewage system downstream. The pumps have enough capacity to capture all of the sewage flow in dry weather, said Lisle, but they could be overwhelmed by a surge in stormwater.

Crews will work through the weekend, when a bad winter storm is expected, Lisle said, and they hope to have the bypass set up by Monday.

The spill does not impact drinking water, which is a separate system, DC Water said.

Naujoks said the spill is happening at time when the river is low. He went out to look at it Wednesday and was "kind of stunned."

"Sewage is just bubbling up like a small geyser, maybe 2, 3 feet into the air," he said.

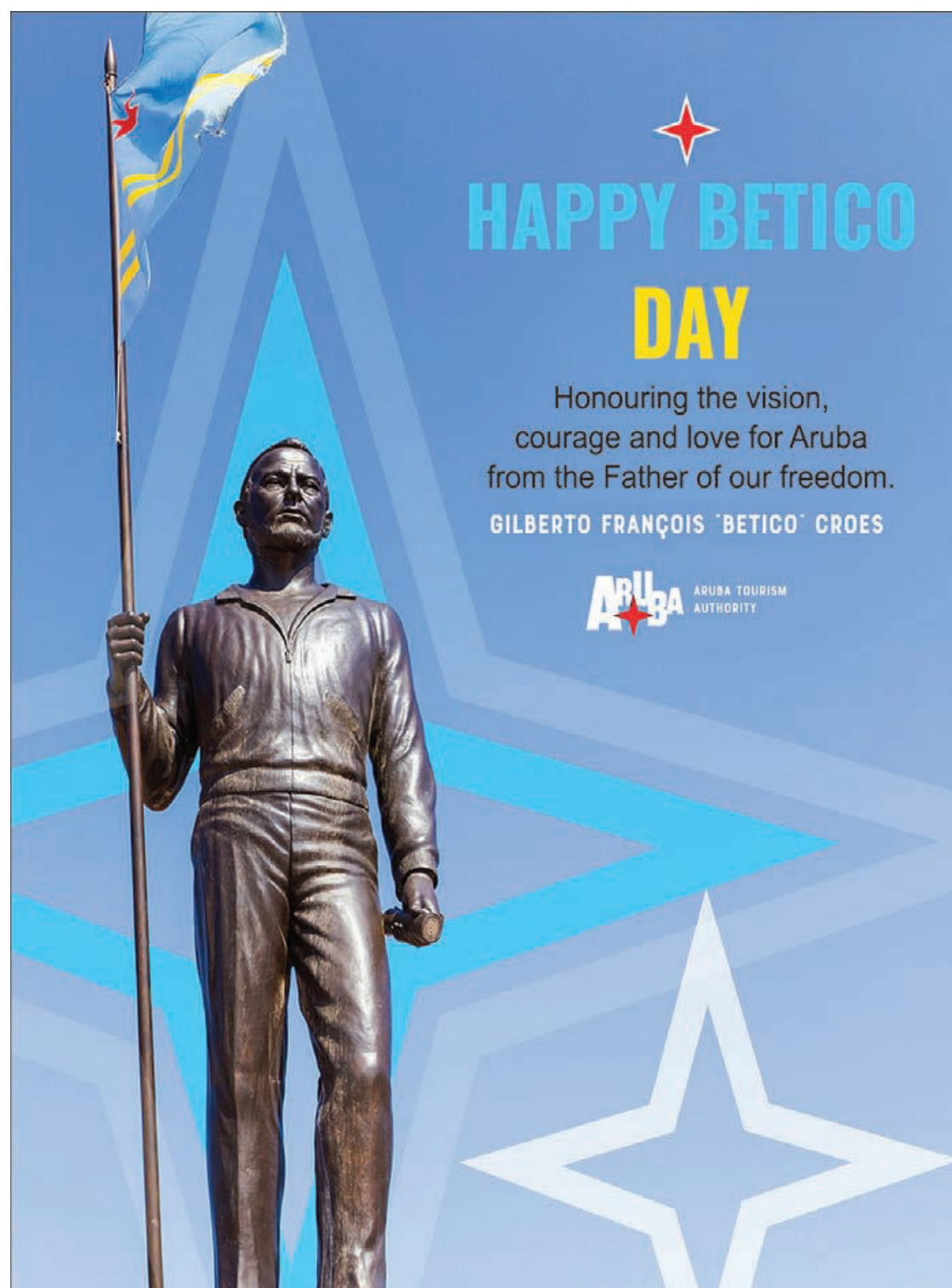
"Sewage water is running in every direction."

The District of Columbia Department of the Environment did not immediately respond to a request for comment, including whether it is testing the river's water.

DC Water knew the pipeline was deteriorating, and rehabilitation work on the section surrounding the break began in September. It was expected to be completed in April. Repair work on additional "high priority" sections of the pipeline is expected to start later this year.

The pipeline, called the Potomac Interceptor, was first installed in the 1960s.

There's a huge funding gap for water infrastructure in the U.S., said Gary Belan, a senior director with American Rivers, an environmental organization that advocates for clean waterways. □



diameter sewer pipe that collapsed late Monday, shooting sewage out of the ground and into the river.

DC Water spokesperson John Lisle said the utility estimates the overflow at about 40 million gallons (about 150 million liters) each day enough to fill about 66 Olympic-size swimming pools but it's not clear exactly how much has spilled into the river since the overflow began.

"Oh, my god, the smell is horrific," said Dean Naujoks, the Potomac Riverkeeper and part of an environmental nonprofit. "It's such high concentrations of sewage that just grabbing a sample is a public health risk."

Associated Press video from the scene showed signs posted near the river that read "DANGER" and "Raw Sewage" and warned people not to enter the area. Naujoks and another man donned protective gloves to take samples of water from the river to test for E. coli and other bacteria.

Small bits of debris could be seen floating in some of the sample bottles.

The spill occurred in Montgomery County, Maryland, along Clara Barton Parkway, which hugs the northern edge of the Potomac

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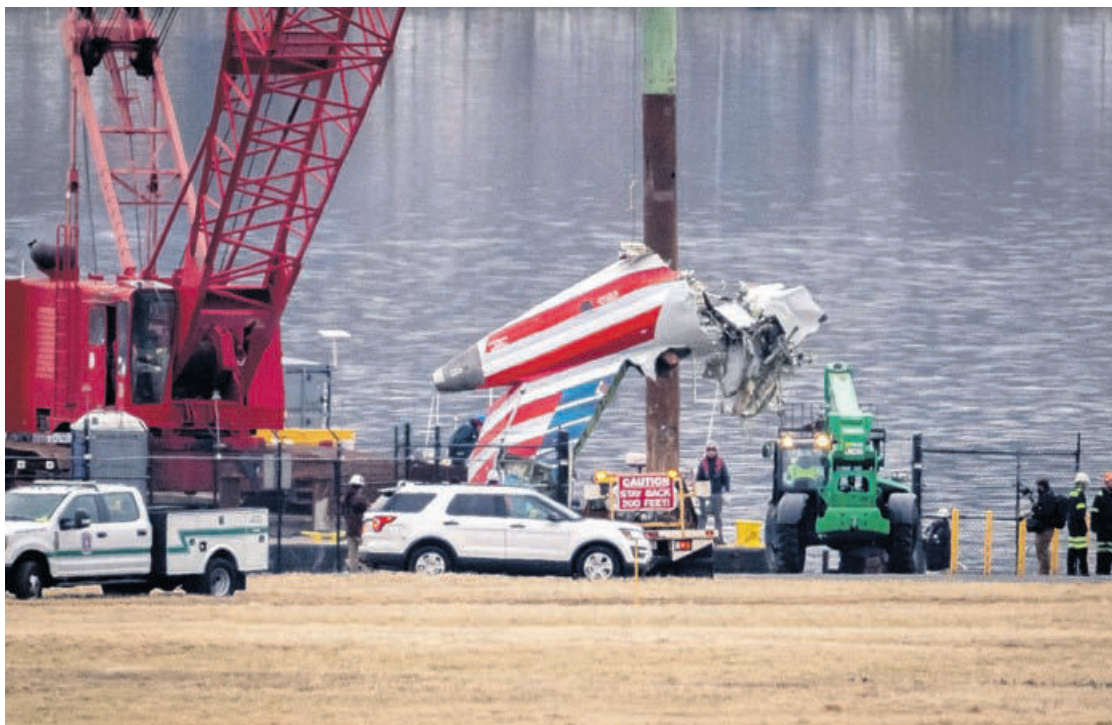
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FAA is making the rules imposed after an airliner collided with an Army helicopter permanent

By JOSH FUNK
AP Transportation Writer

The temporary rules imposed after last year's collision of an airliner and an Army helicopter to improve the safety of the crowded airspace around Washington D.C. are being made permanent, the government announced Thursday. The Federal Aviation Administration took steps to make sure that helicopters and airplanes would no longer share the same airspace around Reagan National Airport shortly after the investigation into the Jan. 29 crash began. The rules also prohibit air traffic controllers from relying on visual separation and require all military aircraft to broadcast their locations. The National Transportation Safety Board plans to hold a hearing next Tuesday to detail everything that contributed to the deadliest plane crash on American soil since 2001.



A crane offloads a piece of wreckage from a salvage vessel onto a flatbed truck, near the wreckage site in the Potomac River of a mid-air collision between an American Airlines jet and a Black Hawk helicopter, at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, Feb. 5, 2025, in Arlington, Va.

"After that horrific night in January, this administration made a promise to do whatever it takes to secure the skies over our nation's

capital and ensure such a tragedy would never happen again. Today's announcement reaffirms that commitment," Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy

said.

The families of the 67 people who died after an Army Black Hawk helicopter struck an American Airlines jet that was preparing to

land hope Duffy and Congress will act on the recommendations NTSB is expected to make next week to help prevent a similar tragedy from ever happening again.

Matt Collins, who lost his younger brother Chris in the disaster, said he and many of the other families plan to keep going to Washington so often that lawmakers will get sick of seeing them until changes are made.

"I hope to have some hearings done in the Senate and Congress, and I hope results come out of these hearings that they have," said Collins who lives in Dighton, Massachusetts. "I hope we're not just placated and it falls off into the background until another big news story comes up."

The FAA said the new final rule will take effect on Friday. □

Associated Press

New York school violated civil rights law by changing name from 'Thunderbirds' to 'T-Birds,' U.S. says

BOHEMIA, N.Y. (AP) — A New York school district is "erasing its Native American heritage" and violating civil rights law by changing its team name from the "Thunderbirds" to the "T-Birds," federal education officials say.

The U.S. Department of Education said Thursday that the Connetquot Central School District can voluntarily resolve the federal law violation by restoring the "rightful" Thunderbirds' name.

The Long Island district, like

others in the state, changed its team name in order to comply with state regulations banning Native American sports names and mascots.

But federal education officials argue the state mandate violates civil rights law because it allows schools to continue using names derived from other racial or ethnic groups, such as the "Dutchmen" and "Huguenots."

"We will not allow ideologues to decide that some mascots based on national origin are acceptable while

others are banned," said Kimberly Richey, who heads the Education Department's civil rights office. "The Trump Administration will not relent in ensuring that every community is treated equally under the law." The school district said it is reviewing the federal finding, but state education officials excoriated it, saying the conclusion "makes a mockery" of the nation's civil rights laws.

"USDOE has offered no explanation as to whose civil rights were violated by changing a team name

from Thunderbirds to T-birds," JP O'Hare, spokesperson for the agency, said in a statement Friday. "NYSED remains

committed to ending the use of harmful, outdated, and offensive depictions of Indigenous people." □



An electronic display shows the new mascot name, T-Birds, outside Connetquot High School in Bohemia, N.Y., Sept. 4, 2025.

Associated Press

TikTok finalizes a deal to form a new American entity

By **KAITLYN HUAMANI**
AP Technology Reporter

TikTok has finalized a deal to create a new American entity, avoiding the looming threat of a ban in the United States that has been in discussion for years on the platform now used by more than 200 million Americans. The social video platform company signed agreements with major investors including Oracle, Silver Lake and the Emirati investment firm MGX to form the new TikTok U.S. joint venture. The new version will operate under "defined safeguards that protect national security through comprehensive data protections, algorithm security, content moderation and software assurances for U.S. users," the company said in a statement Thursday. American TikTok users can continue using the same app.

President Donald Trump praised the deal in a Truth Social post, thanking Chinese leader Xi Jinping specifically "for working with us and, ultimately, approving the Deal." Trump add that he hopes "that long into the future I will be remembered by those who use and love TikTok."



The icon for the TikTok video sharing app is seen on a smartphone in Marple Township, Pa., Feb. 28, 2023.

Adam Presser, who previously worked as TikTok's head of operations and trust and safety, will lead the new venture as its CEO. He will work alongside a seven-member, majority-American board of directors that includes TikTok's CEO Shou Chew.

The deal ends years of uncertainty about the fate of the popular video-sharing platform in the United States.

After wide bipartisan majorities in Congress passed and President Joe Biden signed a law that would ban TikTok in the U.S. if it did not find a new owner in the place of China's ByteDance, the platform was set to go dark on the law's January 2025 deadline. For a several hours, it did. But on his first day in office, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to keep it running while his administration

sought an agreement for the sale of the company. "China's position on TikTok has been consistent and clear," Guo Jiakun, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson in Beijing, said Friday about the TikTok deal and Trump's Truth Social post, echoing an earlier statement from the Chinese embassy in Washington.

Apart from an emphasis on data protection, with U.S.

user data being stored locally in a system run by Oracle, the joint venture will also focus on TikTok's algorithm. The content recommendation formula, which feeds users specific videos tailored to their preferences and interests, will be retrained, tested and updated on U.S. user data, the company said in its announcement.

The algorithm has been a central issue in the security debate over TikTok. China previously maintained the algorithm must remain under Chinese control by law. But the U.S. regulation passed with bipartisan support said any divestment of TikTok must mean the platform cuts ties specifically the algorithm with ByteDance. Under the terms of this deal, ByteDance would license the algorithm to the U.S. entity for retraining.

The law prohibits "any co-operation with respect to the operation of a content recommendation algorithm" between ByteDance and a new potential American ownership group, so it is unclear how ByteDance's continued involvement in this arrangement will play out. □

Associated Press

Google offers users option to plug AI mode into their photos, email for more personalized answers

By **MICHAEL LIEDTKE**
AP Technology Writer
SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google is leveraging its artificial intelligence technology to open a new peephole for

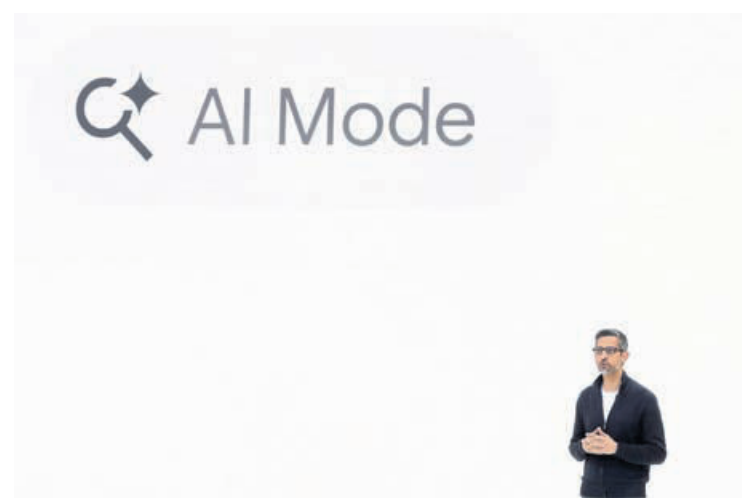
its dominant search engine to tailor answers that draw upon people's interests, habits, travel itineraries and photo libraries.

The new option rolling out Thursday will give millions of people the option of turning on a recently introduced tool called "Personal Intelligence" within the AI mode that has been available on Google's search engine since last year. The technology will be first offered in the U.S. to Google AI Pro and Ultra subscribers, as well as an option within its experimental Labs division for anyone with a personal Google account. If turned on, the new tool will plug Google's AI Mode into Gmail and the Google Photos app so the technology can learn more about each user's life and deliver more relevant answers tailored to personal tastes.

For instance, someone might ask for suggestions for a weekend getaway and get a quick recommendation based on past trips and experiences. Or, when in AI mode, the search engine might automatically know a person's favorite restaurants or recognize preferred clothing styles by reviewing old pictures stored in Google Photos.

"Personal Intelligence transforms Search into an experience that feels uniquely yours by connecting the dots across your Google apps," Robby Stein, a vice president in Google Search, wrote in a blog post. Stein also warned Personal Intelligence won't always deliver the best answers, a pitfall

that he said users can help correct by telling AI mode with words or a thumbs-down symbol. Turning on the option will require users to trust Google's search engine to protect the details that it is fed about their lives. But millions of people already have been doing that implicitly for decades while entering sometimes intimate queries into the search engine or sharing personal information within Gmail and the Photos app. Bringing Personal Intelligence to Google search is the latest sign of the company's ambitions to make its arsenal of digital services even more powerful with a boost from the latest AI model, Gemini 3i, that came out in November. □



Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai speaks at a Google I/O event in Mountain View, Calif., Tuesday, May 20, 2025.

Associated Press

Hong Kong vigil organizer says she was seeking democracy, not end to Communist Party rule

By KANIS LEUNG
Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — A prominent activist who organized Hong Kong's decades-old vigil commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen Square military crackdown on democracy protesters said Friday that her group's demand for "ending one-party rule" was a call for democratization, not for an end to the Communist Party's leadership in China. Chow Hang-tung, a former leader of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, stated in court Friday during a trial brought under a national security law that virtually silenced dissent in the city. She was charged with inciting subversion in September 2021 under the law Beijing imposed following massive anti-government protests in 2019. She was accused of inciting others to organize, plan or act through unlawful means with a view to subvert the state power. Lee Cheuk-yan, another former group leader, also pleaded not guilty Thursday to the charge that carries a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment.



Chow Hang-tung, vice chairperson of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of the Democratic Patriotic Movements of China, poses after an interview in Hong Kong on May 24, 2021.
Associated Press

Dispute over meaning of 'ending one-party rule'

The prosecution has focused on "ending one-party rule," one of the alliance's core demands, by arguing the alliance's call meant ending the Chinese Communist Party's leadership, which was against the constitution. There was

no legal means to achieve that, it said.

Chow, a barrister who is defending herself, countered the prosecution claim Friday while appealing to the court to admit an expert's evidence, standing outside the courtroom dock while presenting her argument.

The judges are expected to rule Monday whether to admit the report from a Taiwan-based scholar addressing a definition of democracy and whether democratization must be pursued through unlawful means.

Democracy was the core concept behind the alliance's activities and state-

ments, Chow said in court. "The alliance's position is not to end the Chinese Communist Party's leadership, but to end one-party dictatorship," said Chow, who smiled when supporters in the courtroom wished her well for her birthday on Saturday.

The court heard on Thursday that co-defendant Albert Ho said in 2018 that the call was not to eliminate the Chinese Communist Party and the party could maintain its ruling position through fair elections. Ho pleaded guilty Thursday, which could result in a reduced sentence.

Calling to build 'a democratic China'

For 30 years, the Hong Kong Alliance organized the only large-scale public commemoration of the crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy protests within China. The vigil in Hong Kong drew tens of thousands each year to remember the victims with a sea of candles until authorities banned the event during the COVID-19 pandemic. The alliance also called for "building a democratic China." □

Across the forgotten walls of a Hong Kong island, a flock of bird murals rises

By MAY JAMES
Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — They perch gently on concrete ledges. They nestle into peeling stucco. Occasionally, they soar across a stone house's rooftop. A flock has landed in Wang Tong Village, a peaceful corner of Lantau Island on Hong Kong's southwestern edge. But this flock is unlike others: Its birds are made of paint. They exist on murals designed for a larger purpose not merely to draw attention to forgotten places but to tell the story of the extraordinary journeys birds undertake. Dominic Johnson-Hill, who

envisioned the flock, was captivated by an account from his ornithologist neighbor about the Amur falcon, a bird that travels from Manchuria, pauses in Lantau, then continues its migration across Myanmar, India and Madagascar to South Africa.

"I just assumed these birds lived on the island," Johnson-Hill recalls. "But they're not. They're passing guests."

That sense of wonder became the seed for what became the Flock Project. Johnson-Hill looked at the abandoned house next to his own and imagined a red-billed blue magpie

Painted across the wall. "They just seemed to belong there," he says. To bring the vision to life, Johnson-Hill sought out someone who could paint birds not just accurately but with soul. He found British artist Rob Aspire, known as "The Birdman" for his intricate, expressive murals of birds. One bird led to another. A year later, Johnson-Hill invited Aspire back and commissioned seven more murals. Each bird was chosen for its ecological presence, visual harmony or symbolic resonance with place. A kingfisher keeps watch over a stream where fish-

ing is no longer allowed. A Swinhoe's white-eye blends into the walls near trees where its bright, fluting call

still echoes.

All the murals are painted on abandoned homes except one. □



An Amur Paradise Flycatcher, left, and a Swinhoe's White-eye are seen painted on the wall of an abandoned house near Wang Tong village, Lantau, Hong Kong, Jan. 20, 2025.
Associated Press

Icebreakers, the key tech to unlock Greenland, are only made by either U.S. allies or adversaries

By SAM McNEIL

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The cold, hard reality facing any U.S., NATO or European plans for Greenland is the ice. It chokes harbors, entombs minerals, and freezes shorelines into minefields of white and blue shards that threaten ships all year.

And the only way to break through all that is, well, with icebreakers: enormous ships with burly engines, reinforced hulls, and heavy bows that can crush and cleave ice. But the United States has only three such vessels, one of which is so decrepit as to be barely usable. It has entered agreements to obtain 11 more, but can only source additional ships from adversaries or allies it has recently rebuffed.

The key technology in the Arctic

Despite toning down his rhetoric, U.S. President Donald Trump seems set on the U.S. owning Greenland for security and economic reasons: to keep what he calls "the big, beautiful piece of ice" out of the hands of Moscow and Beijing, to secure a strategic Arctic location for U.S. assets, and to extract the island's mineral wealth including rare earths. Without specifying any plan, he told world leaders gathered in Davos, Switzerland, on Wednesday that "to get to this rare earth you got to go through hundreds of feet of ice."

Yet there is no meaningful way to do that or anything else in the semiautonomous Danish territory without icebreakers' crucial ability to cut trails through frozen seas. Even if they decided to surge U.S. material into Greenland tomorrow, "they would have two or three years gap in which they're not really able to access the island most of the time," said Alberto Rizzi, a fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. "On a map, Greenland looks surrounded by sea, but the reality is that the sea is full of ice," he said.

If the U.S. wants more icebreakers, there are only four



Finnish icebreaker Polaris is moored in Helsinki, Finland, Thursday Sept. 27, 2018.

Associated Press

options: the shipyards of strategic adversaries China and Russia or longtime allies Canada and Finland, both of whom have recently weathered blistering criticism and threats of tariffs by Trump over Greenland.

Northern expertise in ice-capable ships

Icebreakers are expensive to design, build, operate and maintain and require a skilled workforce that can only be found in certain places like Finland, with expertise forged in the frigid Baltic Sea.

Finland has built roughly 60% of the world's fleet of more than 240 icebreakers and designed half the remainder, Rizzi said.

"It's very niche capabilities that they developed as a necessity first and then they have been able to turn it into geoeconomic leverage," he said.

Russia has the world's largest fleet with about 100 vessels, including colossal ships powered by nuclear reactors. Second comes Canada, which is set to double its fleet to around 50 icebreakers, according to a 2024 report by Aker Arctic, a Helsinki-based icebreaker design firm.

"Our design and engineering work order books are pretty full at the moment and the

near future looks promising," said Jari Hurttia, business manager at Aker Arctic, as he describes rising interest in the firm's "unrivalled special competence which is not available anywhere else in the world."

China currently has five compared to the U.S. three, and is rapidly building more as they expand their ambitions in the Arctic, said Marc Lanteigne, a professor at the University of Tromsø in Norway who teaches often at the University of Greenland in Nuuk.

"China is now in a position to develop indigenous icebreakers, and so the U.S. feels it must do the same," he said.

Washington has to play catch up, and fast, said Sophie Arts, a fellow at the German Marshall Fund focused on Arctic security.

"President Trump has really bemoaned this lack of icebreakers, especially in comparison to Russia," Arts said. The 2 of the 3 U.S. icebreakers are "basically past their life cycle already."

So he turned to the undeniable expertise of the European Union's northernmost nation and the U.S.'s neighbor to the north.

"Both Canada and Finland are really, really vital to this,"

Arts said. "Cooperation is what makes this possible ... the U.S. doesn't really have a pathway to do this on its own at this time."

During his first administration, Trump prioritized the U.S. military's acquisition of ice-capable vessels, a strategy that the Biden administration followed up on by signing an agreement called the Ice PACT with Helsinki and Ottawa to deliver 11 icebreakers constructed by two corporate consortiums with Finnish designs.

Four would be built in Finland, while seven would be constructed in a Canadian-owned billion-dollar "American Icebreaker Factory" in Texas as well as a shipyard in Mississippi under joint U.S.-Canadian ownership.

Any mining of critical minerals would face high costs in the harsh conditions at sea and on land in Greenland. Investments there would take years if not decades to pay off, Lanteigne said.

Even with adequate icebreakers, the price to build and maintain mining or defensive facilities like those envisioned in the yet-unfunded \$175 billion Golden Dome missile defense network linking detectors and interceptors in space and on the ground would be

enormous.

That means U.S. allies in the Arctic might still welcome more investment by Washington in Greenland.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said in a statement that she would be open to strengthening Arctic security including the U.S. Golden Dome program "provided that this is done with respect for our territorial integrity."

Market dominance and strategic leverage

While both the U.S. and the 27-nation European Union including Denmark and Finland have pledged to vastly increase investment in Greenland, it is clear who currently has the hard-power capability to actually reach the vast frozen territory roughly three times the size of Texas.

"It's kind of absurd because I don't think Finland would scrap the deal with the U.S. as a response to threatening to invade Greenland," Rizzi said. "But if Europe wants to exercise significant leverage to the USA, they could say 'We're not going to give you any icebreakers and good luck reaching the Arctic, or projecting power there, with those two old ships that you have.'"

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen reminded world leaders Tuesday at Davos of the key EU-technology base for any Arctic endeavors.

"Finland one of the newest NATO members is selling its first icebreakers to the U.S.," von der Leyen said at the World Economic Forum.

"This shows that we have the capability right here, in the ice so to speak, that our northern NATO members have Arctic-ready forces right now, and above all, that Arctic security can only be achieved together."

She announced after an emergency summit of the 27 EU leaders in Brussels on Thursday that the EU would surge defense spending in Greenland including an icebreaker. □

GAIA House of Grill opens its doors at JOIA Aruba by Iberostar



(Oranjestad)—Aruba has one more restaurant to discover and experience. A new House of Grill is now located at JOIA Aruba by Iberostar.

After an extensive period of planning, design, branding, and concept development, GAIA House of Grill came to life and opened its doors to offer Aruba high-quality service, explosive flavors, and an extraordinary culinary experience.

The name GAIA comes from the Greek Goddess of Mother Earth. The new House of Grill concept is led by Executive Chef Alejandro Camurri together with his culinary team, who aim to present a balance between land and sea.

A distinctive menu with bold, explosive flavors is GAIA's specialty. The taste and combination of various ingredients create a unique sensation for every palate and every guest who visits GAIA House of Grill.

GAIA is located at JOIA Aruba by Iberostar, at the front of the hotel overlooking the prestigious Eagle Beach. The indoor dining area offers an exotic atmosphere that sparks curiosity through its selection of furniture, colors, and finishing details in every decorative element. Meanwhile, the outdoor patio allows guests to feel the Aruba breeze, creating a perfect balance of natural elements that come together as GAIA, the Goddess of Mother Earth.

GAIA is open Monday through Sunday, except Tuesdays, from 5:00 PM to 10:30 PM. Guests are encouraged to make reservations via opentable.com and to follow GAIA on social media @gaia.aruba to stay informed about all details and events. □



PSA from the Aruba Conservation Foundation:

How to behave when you see a "lora"

(Oranjestad)—The conservation of the Yellow-Shouldered Amazon, also known as the 'Lora,' relies on how we act as humans. We've seen many hikers who've encountered the 'Lora' in our protected nature areas and we can certainly imagine the pride and joy it brings to any Aruban. However, not everyone may know how to behave when encountering these clever and social birds. This guide is here to explain the behaviors that will most effectively help us in our efforts to conserve the 'Lora.' Please, don't just read but also follow these guidelines so we can ensure the survival of these birds for future generations.

No interfering, please

Please refrain from interfering with the "Lora". The Lora is a highly intelligent and social animal, perhaps slightly too friendly because they have gotten used to the rangers as they prepared for their reintroduction. However, it is our collective responsibility to help them adapt to the wild once again. Please play your part by not interfering (calling, provoking etc.) with the Lora. Simply enjoy their beauty from a safe distance.

Be respectful and keep cats and dogs away

Pets and strays such as cats and dogs are prone to attacking other animals, especially birds, as part of their natural instincts. Please make sure your pets are kept inside of your yard or are kept on a leash when going out for a walk.

Do not feed them food or water

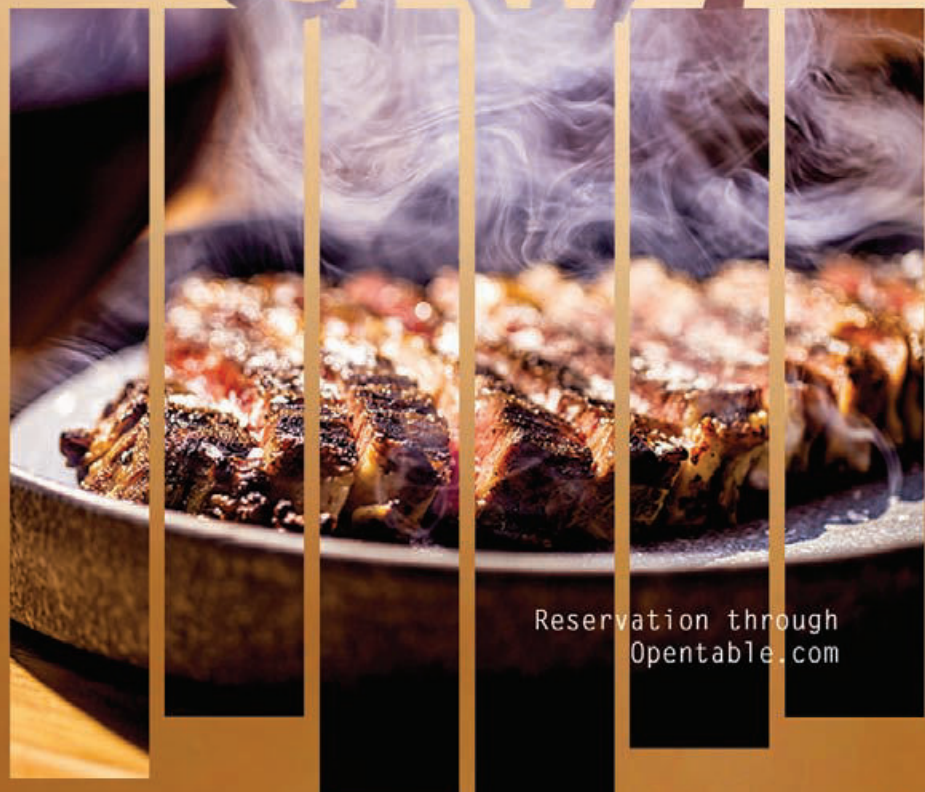
You may think that giving the any food or water is doing a good deed, but it actually does not contribute to them developing survival skills in the wild. By interfering with the survival instincts of wild animals, we are doing the opposite of helping. Therefore, please do not attempt to give the Loras food or water.

Capturing a Lora is against the law!

The biggest threat to the Lora before their extinction in 1947 was caused by human activities including poaching and killing of the Lora. Let's work collectively to prevent this from happening again. So when you see the Lora, enjoy their beauty from a distance and admire them as they flourish in the wild. □

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Oceanfront Condo Prices in Aruba Are Set to Skyrocket - Here's Why



(ORANJESTAD)—Imagine waking up every morning to the sound of gentle waves and stepping onto white sandy beaches under the Caribbean sun. This dream is not just a reality for those lucky enough to own an oceanfront condo in Aruba—it's also an investment opportunity that's about to become even more lucrative.

The Caribbean has long been a haven for those seeking an escape from the cold, offering an unbeatable mix of stunning landscapes, warm weather, and a relaxed lifestyle. From December to April, the region bursts with life as snowbirds flock to its shores, transforming the Caribbean into a vibrant, sun-soaked paradise. During these months, average temperatures range from 76°F in the Bahamas to a perfect 83°F in Aruba, making it a top destination for winter getaways. But what's really driving the market now is the shift to hybrid working, which allows people to extend their stays



from a few weeks to several months. This trend is redefining how and where people choose to live, and the Caribbean—Aruba in particular—is reaping the benefits.

Since 2019, the prime residential property market across the Caribbean has seen steady growth, even in the face of a global pandemic. Buyers are increasingly seeking out second homes or retirement spots, willing to pay top dollar for a slice of paradise. Prices for luxury properties range dramatically—from \$650 per square foot for off-beach villas in Antigua to a staggering \$2,780 per square foot for beachfront villas in the Cayman Islands.

But Aruba is the place to watch! Beyond its world-renowned beaches, safe environment, and solid infrastructure, several factors suggest that prices for oceanfront condos and homes are set to climb even higher.

Limited Supply, Surging Demand

The government of Aruba has placed a moratorium on new condo developments, restricting the supply of new properties at a time when demand is skyrocketing. The number of visitors to the island is on the rise, expected to jump from just over 1 million in 2022 to more than 1.4 million by 2024. Many of these visitors are not just tourists—they're potential buyers. With little oceanfront land left to develop, the laws of supply and demand suggest that prices will only continue to rise. North American buyers, in particular, are snapping up beachfront properties, driving prices higher as available inventory dwindles.

Aruba's Prices Are a Bargain—For Now

Compared to other top-tier beach destinations, Aruba's luxury condos are currently a steal:

- The Bahamas: \$735-\$2,000/sq-ft
- Antigua & Barbuda: \$665-\$1,250/sq-ft
- Barbados: \$750-\$1,400/sq-ft
- Cayman Islands: \$1,140-\$2,780/sq-ft
- Turks & Caicos: \$1,100-\$1,500/sq-ft
- Ft. Lauderdale, FL: \$800-\$1,100/sq-ft
- Aruba: \$600-\$800/sq-ft

But this won't last. As the market tightens and demand continues to surge, Aruba's prices are expected to rise sharply, bringing them more in line with other premium Caribbean islands. Ex-

pect to see more multi-million dollar homes hit the market as the island becomes an increasingly attractive option for affluent buyers.

Appealing to High-Income Visitors

Aruba is gearing up to welcome more affluent visitors, with the opening of a new St. Regis hotel in late 2024 and a refurbishment of the Hyatt under new ownership. These developments signal a shift towards a higher-end market, much like what's been seen in the Turks & Caicos and the Cayman Islands. While Aruba's diverse appeal will remain, the influx of wealthier tourists is likely to boost demand for luxury real estate, driving prices even higher.

Robust Rental Returns

For many buyers, owning a piece of the Caribbean isn't just about having a dream vacation home—it's also a savvy investment. The rental market in Aruba remains strong, especially as tourism continues to bounce back post-pandemic. With the rise of longer stays due to remote working, rental returns are likely to grow, making ownership even more attractive. Whether you're looking to rent out your property during the high season or enjoy it yourself, the potential for strong rental income is yet another reason why investing in Aruba's oceanfront condos makes sense.

Conclusion: The Time to Invest Is Now

Aruba's prime residential market is on the cusp of significant growth. The island's appeal—a combination of natural beauty, safety, strong infrastructure, and an inviting climate—combined with limited supply and increasing demand, is setting the stage for a surge in oceanfront condo prices. With prices still low compared to other Caribbean hotspots, now is the time to invest. Don't wait too long—Aruba's oceanfront condos are poised to become some of the most coveted real estate in the Caribbean. □



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A quick snack for the road Learn how to make the Aruban Pastechi!

(Oranjestad)—If you ever been to Aruba before, you probably heard of (and even tried) the Aruban Pastechi. Beloved by young and old, this tasty treat is a staple for party snacks, a quick lunch or even breakfast!

Here's how to make the Pastechi dough.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups of wheat flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder (if using self-rising flour, omit baking powder)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 0.5 cup of melted butter
- 1 cup water
- 1 egg

Directions:

Sift your flour into a bowl and add all the dry ingredients before giving it a quick mix. Next add the butter, water and egg and mix until thoroughly combined. At this point, your dough will start to get sticky; time for an arm workout. Knead your dough into the bowl you

are using or on a clean surface with some flour lightly dusted until its surface is smooth. You'll know your dough is ready when it doesn't stick to your hands or the surface on which you're kneading it. Let your dough rest covered for 15-20 minutes.

After resting, divide your dough into approximately 100 gram balls and roll it flat with a rolling pin. The thickness of the pastechi depends on your taste, but the average thinness would be around 1/4 inch or so.

Filling for the pastechis varies according to your taste. The easiest and most common filling you'll find in Aruba is a simple cheese filling. For this, we usually use shredded Gouda, but feel free to use any cheese that melts well when frying the pastry.

Place the filling on your rolled out piece of dough, fold it in half and pinch the sides shut with a fork. If you have a folding tool, feel free to use it for this process. Your pastechi is ready for the fryer!



If you want to store some pastechis for later use, you can freeze them. A good tip is to place a piece of wax paper in between each pastechi if you are to store them on top of one another. This way the pastechis don't stick to each other when defrosting.

Here in Aruba we enjoy pastechi at any time of the day, but it has become almost tradition to eat pastechis for breakfast on the way to work. Many roadside snack trucks sell pastechi from early morning to noon, and offer a variety of fillings like cheese; ham and cheese; ground beef and pulled chicken to name a few. □

Fun facts about cacti hedges “Trankera”



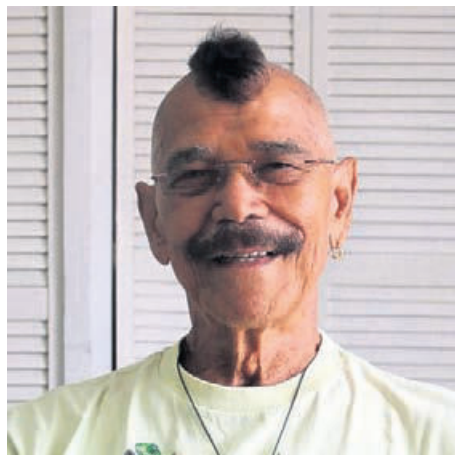
(Oranjestad) – When off-roading in inland Aruba, you may notice some cacti hedges around various properties or lined up by certain pathways. These man-made hedges are called “trankera” and play an important role in maintaining our flora and fauna.

The trankera dates to colonialism, where settlers established several ‘cunucu’ (farm) on the island. People either used stone walls or trankera as a fence to ward off strangers and wild animals that can feed on the cunucu vegetation or cattle.

Nowadays, trankeras are less common, and those that still stand are often not maintained. On the surface this seems like a bad development, however this proved to be beneficial for our flora and fauna. Naturally developed flora around the hedges offers more shelter for fauna. Another aspect is the propagation process. When pruning hedges, flowers and seeds were removed, which limits propagation to a minimum.

So, though trankeras don't play that big of a role in Aruba's agriculture anymore, our environment still reaps the benefits of these long-standing natural structures. □

A brief history of the California Light House



(Oranjestad)—At the furthest western point of the island, there lies the tallest structure on the island: The California Light House. Standing on top of a limestone cliff, this lighthouse oversees the entire island, offering one of few best views of the island and the surrounding sea. It is also one of the few monuments that hold a rich history.

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs. Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Lighthouse at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to Westpunt carrying the cargo, poles,

cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck.

These things reflect how people could have accomplished this tremendous job with so little." Mr. Fingal said, "At that time, it wasn't a place for people to work. It was very challenging because it was full of goats and donkeys, and it was very isolated. There were no hotels or roads to get there. There was only a donkey trail. Those were the only means of transportation."

Mr. Fingal continues, "In 1939, I was born in the lighthouse, and my father was the last lighthouse keeper until he retired in 1962. After that, they removed the power cables all the way to the top. According to the story, we couldn't have the light ourselves because they dismantled it, and after many years, I heard that it is in a train museum in San Nicolas, where we found this very special lens that, when the light shines through it, it reaches 30 kilometers out to sea." Mr. Fingal told our reporter.

The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back to the day when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because

it was manufactured in France. At that time, there was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr. Fingal said.

Mr. Fingal discovered something very interesting about the lighthouse after much research was documented in his book 'History of the Lighthouse at Westpunt.' He found many details: "I found out that the height of the lighthouse was due to the absence of electricity. There was also the presence of coral. There is a long steel cable from where the light is, and under the light, at the highest point, there is a hanging weight, a sort of pendulum that swings like that, with a weight that measures about 1 meter by 30 centimeters wide, which is a block of solid iron attached to a cable. When you release it upwards, it comes down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually. And while it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the light shines on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to collapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

Mr. Fingal further explains that in one night, the lighthouse rotates 4,320 times and consumes one gallon of kerosene for the whole operation. "At that time, the kerosene was supplied from the Lago refinery. Every

day it was brought down, and to start the light again, they had to lift the weight up, so our job as children was to crank it and raise the weight back up in the evening when the light stuck, they would take it down again, and the light stayed down. That's how it worked for a very long time," Mr. Fingal explains.

Thanks to the Monument Fund Aruba, which worked hard and is currently in charge of the Lighthouse, Mr. Fingal is very happy with its preservation, along with all the renovations that have taken place. He hopes that the story of the lighthouse will continue to live on for future generations.

Special announcement from the Monument Fund Aruba for 2025

Starting Monday, October 13th, until the end of 2025, the California Lighthouse will be closed to the public. The reasoning behind this is that the lighthouse is due for a major maintenance.

Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba (SMFA) is the owner of the lighthouse and operates under a maintenance plan in which each year, different monuments belonging to the foundation receive upkeep.

Recently, work was completed on the Casita Geel on Weststraat, and now it will continue with the California Lighthouse.

Due to the lighthouse's location and its daily use, it is one of the monuments that requires a lot of maintenance. The work is expected to last approximately two and a half months. □



Aruba: The island of Aloes

ORANJESTAD – Aloe Vera, a succulent plant species, is renowned for its incredible properties for the skin. It is widely distributed and usually grows in tropical, semi-tropical and arid climates on the planet. But this plant also had a very prominent role in the history of Aruba, and its significance to the island's economy endures to this day.

The leaves of Aloe Vera contain a good amount of gel which when used topically, is great for the skin. Traditionally, Arubans use this gel to treat minor burns and other skin ailments, or just to keep skin supple and looking bright and nourished. Aside from the gel, aloe contains a bitter, yellow substance (called aloin) which is a gentle but powerful laxative, and it is also the origin of the industry of aloe in Aruba.

Aloe vera was introduced in Aruba around 1840, when most of the island's inhabitants were farmers of little means. Dutch Governor



Van Raders introduced the plant after it had been introduced in other islands of the Caribbean to cultivate and harvest the aloe to produce the laxative.

Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes."

Under Commander Jan Helenus Ferguson (1866-1871), aloe experienced a boom, which is why there is a road named after him,

which goes through the aloe fields. In the 19th century, Aruba was the main supplier of aloin for laxative, which was imported abroad to the United States and Europe. The aloin from Aruba and Curaçao was known to be one of the best in the world and was more expensive, which meant that at the time, it had significant economic impact, particularly for the local farmers.

However, by the time the oil industry arrived on Aruba, it changed the labor market



on Aruba, shifting away from agriculture. It would be after World War II that aloe would make a comeback. And eventually, as science learned about the amazing properties of aloe gel, the industry shifted from producing laxative to producing skin care. An interesting fact is that in 1951, the production of Aruban aloe amounted to around 30 percent of the total global production!

The impact and relevance of aloe is visible all around

Aruba. While most homes will have a few plants for personal use and decoration, houses are also decorated with aloe motifs, and at some point, aloe even featured on post stamps. Around 1920, about two-thirds of Aruba was aloe fields, earning our island the nickname "The Island of Aloes." And in 1955, the aloe became a part of Aruba's coat of arms, symbolizing prosperity for the island. □

Images from the archive of the National Library of Aruba.

Beautiful areas around Aruba

(Oranjestad)—In Aruba, there are tons of activities that to enjoy during your visit, but sometimes you just want to slow down and enjoy the view. Here are some beautiful areas on the island that will have you in awe.

The hidden Natural Bridge

Here in Aruba we have three natural bridges and many see this one on thinking that it's the world famous one but it's not. The why is easy, it's way too dangerous

to go down the cliff to reach this beauty and no tour companies will do that. Some people refuse to go down due fear of height. To reach this beauty you must go to San Nicolas and drive up the hill till The Point Lighthouse, park your car and walk until you reach the east point coast and go left along the coastline and good luck going down the cliff.

Surfside Beach

This beach was very famous when

we were kids and many locals love to swim at this beach. After some years the locals shifted to the more north-west beaches like Eagle, Boca Catalina and Arashi but after the government renovated the whole area it got a new face-lift and its back as a family beach and weekends are just amazing at this area.

Natural Bridge at Blackstone Beach

As mentioned, there are three nat-



ural bridges and this one is in the Arikok National Park. The other two Bridges you can visit by car but for this one you must have a 4x4 jeep or you will get stuck at the Andicuri Beach. □



CROSSWORD

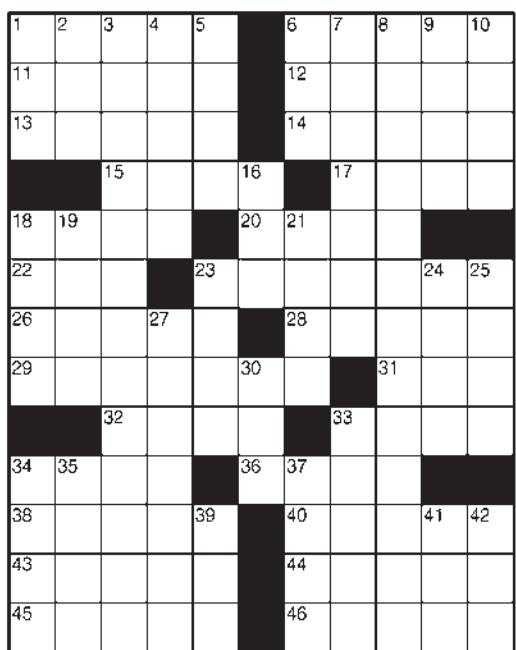
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Indiana player
- 6 Make lumber out of
- 11 Texas landmark
- 12 Sung drama
- 13 Meek
- 14 Salad servers
- 15 "Frozen" queen
- 17 Dele undoer
- 18 Feel sorry for
- 20 Damon of "The Martian"
- 22 Hubbub
- 23 Family of five, say
- 26 Rose part
- 28 Paris subway
- 29 Depth charges, in naval slang
- 31 Egg layer
- 32 Sicilian peak
- 33 Accomplishment
- 34 Remove
- 36 Work the fields
- 38 Steer clear of
- 40 Many Mideast natives
- 43 Audacity
- 44 Dome home

DOWN

- 45 Putting site
- 46 Kick back
- 1 Contrived
- 2 Oscar winner
- 3 Made oneself prominent
- 4 Writer Brontë
- 5 Reactor parts
- 6 Lush
- 7 John or Paul
- 8 Made every possible effort
- 9 Spur on
- 10 Days gone by
- 16 Dr.'s org.
- 18 One of a bear trio
- 19 Midmonth day
- 21 Prepares for war
- 23 Large family
- 24 Open space
- 25 Warning word
- 27 When Macbeth dies
- 30 After-noon break
- 33 Smith's place
- 34 "Shucks!"
- 35 Finished
- 37 Animal home
- 39 Animal home
- 41 Squeezing snake
- 42 Boston team, for short



2-3

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-3 CRYPTOQUOTE

C GEXN ZNNT, ETS EDKEBI
IGEDD ZN, BLPY RYCNTS.
DCXN DLTQ ETS JYLIJNY.
— "IAEY AYNM CC: AGN
KYEAG LR MGET"

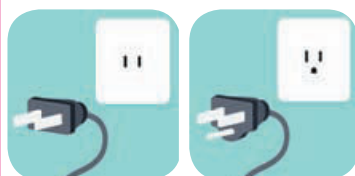
Cryptoquote: DID YOU EVER DANCE
WITH THE DEVIL IN THE PALE MOONLIGHT?
— "BATMAN"

Cruise ship Schedule: Jan. 24 - 28 2026

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
SAT	24	MARELLA DISCOVERY 2	08.00	20.00	B	1
		EVIRIMA	08.00	21.00	C	1
SUN	25	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
MON	26	BRITANNIA	08.00	16.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL SPIRIT	09.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	27	SERENADE OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
		OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	I	1
WED	28	CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE	08.00	23.00	B	1
		NORWEGIAN SKY	11.00	20.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	I	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★★★

1/24

Answer to previous puzzle

6	2	9	1	4	5	8	3	7
7	5	3	6	2	8	9	1	4
4	1	8	3	7	9	6	5	2
5	8	4	7	9	1	2	6	3
1	6	2	4	8	3	5	7	9
3	9	7	2	5	6	4	8	1
8	7	6	9	3	2	1	4	5
2	3	5	8	1	4	7	9	6
9	4	1	5	6	7	3	2	8

Difficulty: ★★★★★

1/23

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What's a 'Good Enough' Financial Plan?



A screen above the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange displays the closing number for the Dow Jones industrial average, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2026.

Associated Press

Christine Benz of Morningstar

I'm a classic satisficer: I'm usually quick about making decisions and often fall back on the tried-and-true. Some people are optimizers, carefully analyzing almost every choice, whether it's a new sofa or a cup of coffee.

If you want to make decent, "good enough" choices about your financial plan and portfolio and get onto other things, what strategies should you employ? And what should you stop doing? Here are some strategies to embrace.

Eliminate 'onesies' and embrace simple building blocks

Step away from those individual stocks. Forget 1 bonds and ladder portfolios of individual Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities. If you're a satisficer, they're not for you. Reduce your number of accounts and the holdings within them.

A portfolio with fewer moving parts is easier to oversee and simpler to document in case your loved ones or a financial advisor needs to take the wheel. Moreover, Morningstar research indicates that investors tend to do a better job buying and holding broadly diversified investments than they do ones

that are more focused.

While they might not compel over some shorter time horizons, total-market index funds have been highly competitive with actively managed funds on a long-term basis, and they require little to no oversight. That means that satisficer portfolios should be heavy on total market index funds and even all-in-one investments like target-date funds. Satisficers should have as few accounts as possible, too.

Minimize other financial relationships

I'm part of a group chat with some delightful people

who are keen to maximize their gains from credit cards and hotel loyalty programs. They're always sharing tips on new card offers and swapping in and out of cards to score free travel.

These people have traveled all over the world, and there's something to be said for beating the banks at their own game. They're also eager to take advantage of free financing programs when buying cars, furniture, and electronics. Why not let the bank float you a loan and invest the funds in the interim, particularly now that you can earn a decent return on

your safe money?

Yet as much as the math might argue for such strategies, managing multiple credit relationships requires time, energy, and discipline that most people don't have to spare. For that reason, taking a minimalist approach to credit cards and other financial relationships is a good policy for most households, especially satisficing ones. My credit-card-optimizer friends might disagree, but I tend to think that a single, well-chosen credit card or two is plenty.

Automate everything you can

The data suggest that dollar-cost averaging is inferior to lump-sum investing. To which I say, "So what?" The fact is, most of us don't have big lump sums lying around; we're able to invest only as we earn money and save it.

Making automatic investments addresses a number of financial pain points in a single shot. □



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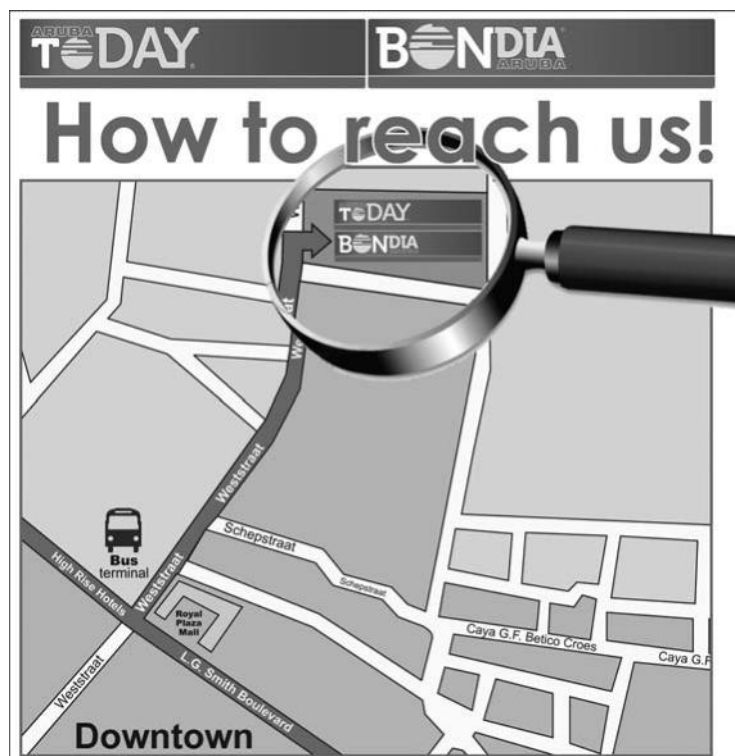
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San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Eagle: Tel. 587 9011

San Nicolas:

Centro Medico: Tel. 584 5794

OTHER

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Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002

Urgent Care 586 0448

Walk-In Doctor's Clinic

+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

Aruba Food Bank	Tel. 588 0002
FAVI- Visually Impaired	Tel. 582 5051
Alcoholics Anonymous	Tel. 736 2952
Narcotics Anonymous	Tel. 583 8989
Fundacion Contra Violencia Relacional	Tel. 583 5400
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Kindness at work can mean giving honest feedback, limiting meetings and bending rules

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Beth Brown was assigned to a major project at work when hardship struck. First, her 6-month-old daughter fell ill with COVID-19. A few days later, her mother passed away.

Brown, director of health and well-being at a company that provides employee mental health programs and absence management services, sent a note to the senior ComPsych director who was her partner on the project, explaining she would have to miss work to care for her daughter and to make funeral arrangements. "The guilt that I felt for knowing I was going to leave her dry on my end," she recalled.

Instead of calling to go over remaining tasks, the director reached out to ask whether Brown was OK and to tell her not to worry about the project. "In the grand scheme of things, this is not important," Brown recalled her colleague saying. "It'll be here when you get back. I'll be there when you're back." Hearing the kind words, Brown "felt like there was a brick taken off my chest."

The importance of treating others with kindness is one of the first lessons most parents and guardians try to teach children. But the skill sometimes falls by the wayside in work settings that encourage competition and where adults face deadlines and pressure. Financial worries and fears of layoffs also can stifle generous impulses.

Perhaps that's why acts of kindness on the job often are so memorable for those on the receiving end. Molly MacDermot, director of special initiatives at Girls Write Now, a nonprofit mentorship and writing program, feels lucky to have a boss who was kind to her when MacDermot's father died eight years ago and her mother passed away six months ago.

As technology accelerates



Illustration / Peter Hamlin

the pace of many types of work, "it's really important to feel human, to be allowed to be human, which is getting the grace to just deal with the bumps in life," MacDermot said.

Kindness can also mean sharing hard truths in a productive way, going out of the way to welcome a new coworker or bending the rules for the sake of love. Here are some examples of kindness in action and ideas for spreading goodwill at work.

Create safe spaces

Treating others with warmth and consideration may be especially meaningful at a time of heightened political divisions that has many people feeling like they have to choose sides, said Anna Malaika Tubbs, a sociologist and author of "The Three Mothers" and "Erased."

"Especially in a workplace, where you can level the playing field and really make sure people know, 'Hey, you're welcome here and you're seen here,' that can really make a difference at a time when on a national level people feel really divided from each other," Tubbs added.

One way to encourage empathy at work is to create an environment where people get to know each

other, Tubbs said. Organizing staff retreats where family members are welcome, bringing in guest speakers, starting book clubs and scheduling fun offsite activities like going to an escape room are ways to generate shared experiences and facilitate healthy dialogues, she said.

The goal isn't "to erase political difference or erase being able to disagree with each other" but to promote a cultural shift by encouraging behavior and actions different from the ones that often get rewarded at work, Tubbs said.

"Let's not show up to meetings thinking that we have to compete and show who's going to be the loudest and who's going to be the most dominant," she said. "What would look differently if we were collaborating with each other? If we were more focused on community?"

Creating a supportive culture within an organization requires daily attention, said Maya Nussbaum, the founder of Girls Write Now and MacDermot's boss. She starts meetings with "heart warmers," a time for staff members to share their thoughts on topics as simple as a favorite candle. She also encourages actively listening to different

perspectives.

"Productivity is better when people feel that they're valued and they're listened to and they matter," Nussbaum said.

"They're going to work harder and they are going to care, and they're going to channel their passion as opposed to feeling dismissed."

Provide real feedback

Compassion can mean sharing hard truths in a tactful way. For example, it's challenging to let people know they aren't meeting performance expectations, but "sometimes kindness is getting out of your comfort zone and telling someone the truth so they can shine," said Chantel Cohen, founder and CEO of Atlanta-based CWC Coaching and Therapy, a counseling and life coaching practice in Atlanta.

When providing feedback as a manager, give specific examples to illustrate the behaviors that need improvement, she said. "Kindness isn't a conflict-free workplace. Kindness is a workplace where repair is possible or improvement is possible," Cohen said.

However, remember to acknowledge successes. Karla Cen recalls a former boss who she says criticized her several times a day. She

learned a lot, but felt unrelenting pressure.

A manager at the retirement community in Florida where Cen works now brought her a potted plant on her first day after driving four hours to meet her. Another manager provides encouraging feedback daily.

"Having her pass by and say, 'You did that really well today,' it just really uplifts the mood of the whole department and makes us ready to come in for the next challenges," Cen said.

Give back time

Before scheduling a meeting, consider whether the goals can be accomplished another way. For example, a manager can tell a working group, here's what's on the agenda, take time to think about it and send your ideas in writing, Cohen suggested.

"Sometimes, the gift of time is such a kindness," she said. "Maybe you can't give your team time off right now, but what you could do a couple times a quarter is just say, 'Hey we're going to skip tomorrow's meeting and here are the things I want you all to think about. Submit this in writing so that you can have the time for yourselves.'"

Keeping meetings structured and focused also frees up time, Nussbaum said.

Reconsider rules

Meher Murshed began dating a colleague, Anupa Kurian-Murshed, more than two decades ago when they both worked at Gulf News in Dubai. The couple wanted to marry, but the newspaper prohibited spouses from working in the same department. They feared one of them would have to quit if they wed.

So they appealed to their editor-in-chief, who raised the issue with the managing director. The top managers decided the couple could keep their jobs and get married as long as one of them didn't report to the other. □

After applying the pressure all season, Broncos defense now producing turnovers in playoffs

By PAT GRAHAM

AP Sports Writer

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP)

— Finally, all that pressure paid off for pass rusher Nik Bonitto and the Denver defense. Finally, the Broncos produced what's been missing much of the season — takeaways.

It's been a long time coming for a defense that's been one of the best in the NFL. The Broncos forced five turnovers last weekend against the Buffalo Bills, four from Josh Allen, who hadn't coughed up the ball in his previous six playoff games. They may be under pressure to turn in a similar sort of turnover-fest against Drake Maye and the New England Patriots in the AFC championship game Sunday. That way, they can take the pressure off backup Jarrett Stidham, who's taking over at QB with Bo Nix out with a broken ankle. The Broncos led the league with 68 sacks but had only 14 takeaways.

"Everyone's been saying it for the whole season, that it would eventually flip," linebacker Alex Singleton said.



Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen (17) fumbles the ball while being tackled by Denver Broncos linebacker Nik Bonitto (15) during the second half of an NFL divisional round playoff football game, Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026, in Denver.

It did, and they needed every one of them to beat the Bills 33-30 in overtime on a field goal set up by Ja'Quan McMillian's interception on a deep throw to Brandin Cooks.

The Broncos were one of the best teams at applying pressure in the regular season, but they only had

10 interceptions and four fumble recoveries to show for it.

"I just feel like the emphasis that we put on these last couple of weeks, on creating turnovers and just knowing that we have the guys to go do it, I feel like it's been real good," Bonitto said. "We've been see-

ing the turnovers and more attempts at the ball and stuff like that. It's been real crucial."

Bonitto forced two fumbles from Allen, in part because of something defensive coordinator Vance Joseph told him.

"He's like, 'You know, if you get the ball, you can still

get a sack," cracked Bonitto, who finished fifth in the league with 14 sacks. "We've been working on it."

It's a talented defense led by All-Pro defensive lineman Zach Allen, Bonitto and star cornerback Pat Surtain II. They ranked in the top 10 in total yards (second), yards rushing (second) and yards passing (seventh).

The Broncos finally started taking the ball away when they got to the postseason. "It's playoff football and turnovers are very critical," Surtain explained. "I think turnovers are the key element to wins and losses, especially this time of the year. So, to be able to accumulate that many turnovers, it definitely helps us to win games."

So far in the playoffs, Maye has thrown two picks and lost three fumbles but has still beaten the Texans and Chargers handily.

"We've got to find a way to eliminate the explosives on their side and find a way to contain them," Surtain said. □

Associated Press

Colts confirm the FBI has opened an investigation into the death of former owner Jim Irsay

The FBI has opened an investigation into the death of former Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay, team officials confirmed Friday.

When Irsay died in May, the team issued a statement saying he died "peacefully in his sleep." But in late August, The Washington Post reported Irsay continued to battle a longtime addiction to painkillers and that he had overdosed three times in the five years preceding his death.

"We are aware of the investigation, but at this time, we've not been contacted by the FBI or been served with any subpoenas," the Colts said in Friday's statement.

NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said the league

would not comment on the report. The Post reported Thursday that a federal grand jury subpoena it reviewed indicated the FBI is seeking records and information relating to Irsay's death, his "substance (illegal and prescription) use," and his "relationship with Dr. Harry Haroutunian," an addiction specialist based in California. The subpoena was reportedly issued by the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California earlier this month. The Associated Press left a message Friday seeking comment from Haroutunian, whom the Post reported had prescribed pain pills and ketamine to Irsay in the months before his May 2025 death.

In August, the Post report-

ed Irsay was prescribed ketamine, which is most commonly used as a general anesthetic, in his final months and that police were called to the hotel room in Beverly Hills, California, where Irsay died. The Post's earlier report said Haroutunian, was staying at the hotel and overseeing Irsay's treatment and that Haroutunian signed the death certificate.

The Post wrote that Irsay's official cause of death was listed as "cardiac arrest due to pneumonia and heart issues" but no autopsy was performed, and Beverly Hills police closed their investigation into the death days later.

When the first Post story was published in August, Ir-

say's three daughters who now run the Colts Carlie Irsay-Gordon, Casey Foyt and Kalen Jackson issued a statement saying their father "never claimed to be perfect" and acknowl-

edging he used his voice "to reduce the stigma" of addiction and mental health issues to advocate for those who fought similar battles. □



Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay speaks during a news conference at the NFL football team's practice facility Nov. 7, 2022, in Indianapolis.

Associated Press

Carlos Alcaraz wins third-round match but loses 'drop-shot battle' at Australian Open

By JOHN PYE
AP Sports Writer
MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— Carlos Alcaraz had to acknowledge that while he won the third-round match, he lost the battle of the drop shots against Corentin Moutet.

That could be a first for the 22-year-old Spaniard, who grew up relentlessly practicing his drop shots and is now at the Australian Open chasing a career Grand Slam.

The left-handed Moutet mixed things up for Alcaraz in an almost festival Friday vibe on Rod Laver Arena, his blend of drop shots, slice, lobs, tweeners, volleys and even an underarm serve keeping the world's No. 1-ranked player on his toes. "When you play someone like Corentin you don't know what's going to be next," Alcaraz said after his 6-2, 6-4, 6-1 win over the No. 32 seed. "I had so much fun on the court. As you could see, we both pulled off great shots. Great points."

Late in the first set, he said he was already fed up with tracking down drop shots and told his support team "I'm not going to run to get those."

"I thought we were in a drop-



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain plays a backhand return to Corentin Moutet of France during their third round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Friday, Jan. 23, 2026.

shot competition," Alcaraz added, laughing, "but he won!"

Ever the showman, Alcaraz chimed in with some of his own tricks and tweeners. In the first round, Moutet was booed by the crowd for his underarm serve on match point. For his main arena debut, there was much more love from the crowd.

After a winning volley late in the match, he celebrated by extravagantly doffing his cap.

Alcaraz will next play Sunday against No. 19 Tommy

Paul, who advanced when Alejandro Davidovich Fokina retired with an injury after dropping the first two sets 6-1, 6-1.

In night matches, No. 3 Alexander Zverev, the runner-up here last year, advanced 7-5, 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 over Cameron Norrie and No. 6 Alex de Minaur ousted Frances Tiafoe 6-3, 6-4, 7-5. De Minaur next plays No. 10 Alexander Bublik.

Sabalenka, Coco Gauff advance

No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka and No. 3 Coco Gauff had tough

routes through the third round.

Sabalenka said there were times she felt like her head, her hands and her racket were not connected but she still had just enough to squeeze past Anastasia Potapova 7-6 (4), 7-6 (7).

Gauff weathered early trouble against Hailey Baptiste before advancing 3-6, 6-0, 6-3, cutting down her unforced errors and not serving any double-faults in the second set. She next plays No. 19 Karolina Muchova. Sabalenka, chasing her third Australian Open title in four

years, led 6-5 and 40-0 in her opening set but Potapova saved all three set points to send it to a tiebreaker.

In the second set, Potapova recovered two service breaks and again force a tiebreaker. She then had three set points but Sabalenka rallied when the pressure was on.

"She played incredible tennis," Sabalenka said. "I was always on the back foot. There are days where you just have to fight it was such a fight."

Sabalenka won the Australian Open title in 2023 and 2024 and was the runner-up a year ago to Madison Keys. She next faces 19-year-old Canadian Victoria Mboko, who was one of three teenagers advancing on Day 6.

Great's advice

The 18-year-old Iva Jovic beat No. 7 Jasmine Paolini 6-2, 7-6 (3), after getting some advice from 24-time major winner Novak Djokovic.

"He gave me some very attentive tips for my game," the American said. "That was one of the things in the forefront of my mind, because I think when Novak gives you some advice, you follow it." □

College Football Playoff to remain at 12 teams after SEC and Big Ten fail to agree on expansion

IRVING, Texas (AP) — The College Football Playoff will remain at 12 teams after the commissioners of



Indiana holds the trophy after their win against Miami in the College Football Playoff national championship game, Monday, Jan. 19, 2026, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

Associated Press

the Southeastern Conference and Big Ten couldn't come up with a compromise for expansion.

The CFP Management Committee announced Friday the 12-team format would stay the same for the 2026-27 season. The decision provides additional time for evaluation and discussion on the current format and potential changes in the future.

The CFP went from four teams to 12 teams for the 2024 season, and the two most powerful conferences favored further expansion but could not agree on a number.

The SEC pushed for 16 teams, with an emphasis on at-large bids a format favored by the Power Four leagues other than the Big Ten and most of the smaller conferences that are hoping for access into whatever comes next.

The Big Ten has pushed for a bracket of up to 24 teams with multiple automatic qualifiers from each conference. It could do away with the need for conference title games and replace them with seeding games to determine, say, two or three of the automatic spots.

"After ongoing discussion

about the 12-team playoff format, the decision was made to continue with the current structure," CFP executive director Rich Clark said. "This will give the Management Committee additional time to review the 12-team format, so they can better assess the need for potential change.

While they all agree the current format has brought more excitement to college football and has given more schools a real shot in the postseason, another year of evaluation will be helpful." □